THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

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PRESS RELEASE

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FIRST EXHIBITION OF MASTER DRAWINGS FROM FAMOUS ROTTERDAM MUSEUM TO BE SHOWN AT THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART
November 13, 1990 - January 6, 1991

One of the most important exhibitions of master drawings ever shown in the United States will be on view at The Cleveland Museum of Art from November 13, 1990, through January 6, 1991. Drawings from the renowned collection of the Museum Boymans-van Beuningen in Rotterdam--by Pisanello, Dürer, Bruegel, Rembrandt, Rubens, Degas, Cézanne, and many other of the greatest draftsmen in the history of European art--are for the first time traveling as a group to the United States. The exhibition, **From Pisanello to Cézanne: Master Drawings from the Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam**, opened at the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, traveled to the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, and concludes its American tour at the Cleveland Museum.

The exhibition presents 104 sheets from the famous collection, which spans the Renaissance to the 19th century. While the museum's collection is well known to specialists, no catalogue has been published of its holdings since the 1950s and the museum's trustees have never before allowed the finest of their collection to travel. This exhibition is the most recent in a series of significant drawings shows at The Cleveland Museum of Art, which makes a particular effort to offer major drawings collections to its audience in addition to the shows it selects from its own choice holdings. Michael Miller, assistant curàtor in the Department of Prints and Drawings, says that "our own collection of drawings is one of the finest museum collections in the country, and the quality of the museum shows we bring in is very high." Other

recent exhibitions have included drawings from the important English collections, the Chatsworth and Ashmolean collections.

The works chosen from the Rotterdam collection exhibit an immense variety of drawing techniques, from contour drawings, sketches, and studies, to completed works. Michael Miller takes special note of the "immediacy" of drawings, where "one finds the direct trace of the artist working out the idea of the final work. So even a major figure or detail of a finished work can be highly prized by drawings collectors."

The Museum Boymans-van Beuningen.

The fame of the Rotterdam drawing collection derives chiefly from the group of more than 2,000 sheets collected by Franz Koenigs (1881-1941). A wealthy German entrepreneur, Koenigs was one of the leading collectors of old master drawings between the two world wars. In 1935 a financial crisis forced him to give his collection as collateral to an Amsterdam bank; he stipulated that the drawings be placed on deposit at the Museum Boymans, as it was then known. One month before the shipping date, the Rotterdam industrialist D.G. van Beuningen purchased the collection and donated it to the museum. At the same time an agent acting for Adolph Hitler tried to acquire the complete collection for a proposed Führer Museum; he eventually settled for 526 drawings, some of which have since been returned to the Boymans-van Beuningen Museum. The museum has continued to add to its drawing collection over the years.

The Drawings.

The earliest drawing in the collection, the Pisanello studies of nude figures (dated mid-1420s), suggests the new interest in drawing from life. A group of seven

drawings by Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528) evidences the keen eye and vigorous hand of a great artist already comfortable with life drawing. Among them is his remarkable study of the bare feet of a kneeling apostle, a study (1508) for an altarpiece executed with point of brush on blue paper. Other Dürer drawings include a portrait of a peasant woman and The Holy Family.

The greatest of all 16th-century Netherlandish artists, Pieter Bruegel the Elder (c. 1525-1569), is represented by his allegory of Temperance (1560), a design for his print series of the Seven Virtues. While it praises the virtue of moderation and temperate behavior, and its genre scenes are all related to themes of time and measure, the whole overflows with vitality and teems with life.

Five drawings by Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669) virtually span his entire career as a creative artist. The earliest is an intimate portrait of his first wife, Saskia, executed in about 1633. Considerably later works are his superb Recumbent Lion (c. 1650) and the sketch, made in the open air, of A Farmhouse by a Waterway (c. 1653). The portrait study of a man for The Syndics of the Drapers Guild (1662), now in the Rijksmusem, Amsterdam, is one of only three surviving drawings for this late masterpiece.

Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640), the great Flemish master, is also represented by five sheets. They include compositional sketches, figure studies, and portraits noteworthy for their unusually large size as well as their quality. Among the portraits are a carefully realized drawing (1631) in three colored chalks of his second wife and frequent model, Hélène Fourment, once described by a Spanish courtier reporting from Antwerp, Rubens's city, as "the most beautiful woman to be found in Flanders," and a drawing of great clarity and power of A Sister of Hélène Fourment (before 1628).

Giorgione's view of Castel San Zeno, Montagnana, sometimes called Shepherd in a Landscape, is the only drawing securely attributed to him. While it is not directly related to any of Giorgione's paintings, it is reminiscent of his famous painting Tempest in the Accademia in Venice. It is the sole surviving evidence we have of Giorgione, great Venetian colorist (1478-1510), as a draftsman.

Works by Italian Mannerist and Baroque artists include splendid sheets by Parmigianino, Pontormo, Correggio, Tintoretto, and Annibale Carracci. An extraordinarily fluid chalk study of an angel, made about 1760 by G.B. Tiepolo (1696-1770), offers valuable insight into the final development of his drawing style.

Another strength of the collection is the assemblage of works by 18th-century French artists. A group of four by Antoine Watteau (1684-1721) includes a red and black chalk drawing (c. 1715) of two boys who worked on the streets of Paris as shoe cleaners, carrying the tools of their trade.

Among 19th-century artists represented are Ingres, Delacroix, Daumier, Manet, Degas, and Cézanne. J.A.D. Ingres (1780-1867) has left an exquisitely refined pencil Portrait of Madame Reiset and Her Daughter (1844) as a fine example of his aristocratic poses and smoothly idealized forms.

Paul Cézanne (1839-1906) made his watercolor view of Le Chateau Noir (about 1895), in the countryside near his home, during his last years of semi-seclusion in his native Provence.

The Exhibition.

The drawings have been selected by Dr. A.W.F.M. Meij, curator of drawings at the Museum Boymans-van Beuningen. He and Dr. Ger Luijten, also curator of drawings at the museum, wrote the fully illustrated catalogue, which is available for $29.95 (paperback) at the Cleveland Museum bookstore.

The exhibition was organized and circulated by Art Services International. Generous support for the American tour has been provided by the Robert Lehman Foundation, Mr. Ian Woodner, Mrs. John U. Nef, and Mrs. Jacobus Pierot. The exhibition is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities. KLM Royal Dutch Airlines is the official carrier for the exhibition. Additional funding for the catalogue has been provided by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Short color films on the artists represented in the exhibition will be shown in the Museum's audio-visual center on Wednesdays at 12:30 pm and 7:00 pm on the following dates:

December 19	Etching and Color Intaglio, 28 minutes
December 26	Dürer and the Renaissance, 14 minutes
January 2	Rembrandt and the Bible, 30 minutes
January 9	Age of Rococo, 16 minutes
January 16	Eugène Delacroix, 26 minutes
January 23	Jean Ingres, Part I, 26 minutes
January 30	Jean Ingres, Part II, 26 minutes

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For additional information, photographs, and color slides, please contact Ann Edwards or Adele Z. Silver, Public Information Office, The Cleveland Museum of Art, 11150 East Boulevard, Cleveland OH 44106; 216/421-7340.